

Eastern District of Wisconsin

CM/ECF Frequently Asked Questions

How do I access ECF?

<http://ecf.wied.uscourts.gov>

OR

Eastern District of Wisconsin Web Site →→ CM/ECF - Electronic Case Filing →→ CM/ECF Login

Please refer to the ECF User Manual located on the court's web site www.wied.uscourts.gov. Section 3 "Getting Started" contains detailed instructions on logging into ECF, along with information on the submission of documents.

How do I file the initiating documents in a civil case?

Pursuant to Section II.A.2.a. of the Civil ECF Policies and Procedures Manual, the filing of the Complaint or Notice of Removal in a Civil action continues to be accomplished in the traditional manner on paper, rather than electronically. A disk/CD containing all of the initiating documents in PDF format may be submitted simultaneously. If not, one must be submitted within 48 hours, or the PDF files may be e-mailed to wied_clerks_milw@wied.uscourts.gov. To save effort, it is recommended all initial filings be accompanied by the disk/CD.

NOTE: The **original** of the Complaint or Notice of Removal must be conventionally signed by the filing attorney.

The **PDF** file should be electronically signed, i.e., s/Attorney Name.

How do I enter the Case Number for searching?

Even though ECF gives several options as to how the case number *may* be entered, the following format works best – 05-123. Use only the numeric values of the case number, do not use cv or cr.

I'm filing my Notice of Appearance in a case – how does ECF add me as attorney of record for the party I represent?

When electronically filing for the first time in a case in which you have not yet formally appeared, ECF asks the following:

**The following attorney/party associations do not exist for this case.
Please check which associations should be created for this case:**

✓ Party Name (pty:dft) represented by Attorney Name (aty) Lead ✓ Notice

Notice is already checked and should remain checked. This is designating that you will receive electronic notice not only on this filing, but all future filings in the case. If you uncheck the box, ECF will not send you electronic notice of any filings.

How do I convert documents into PDF format?

WordPerfect Version 9 or higher has a PDF conversion built into it. Otherwise you need software to convert documents to PDF format. Adobe Acrobat Writer is one example.

More detailed information can be found in **Appendix D – PDF Guide**, which is located in the **ECF User Manual**. A copy of **Appendix D** is also attached to this document.

What do I do if ECF rejects my electronic filing because it is not in a *valid PDF format*?

Check to see if a security level has been set on the document.

ECF User Manual, Appendix D, located on the Court's web site, www.wied.uscourts.gov, under **CM/ECF - Electronic Case Filing**, states:

Do not use the password or encryption features of your PDF writing software. File security is handled by your browser (typically Internet Explorer® or Firefox) and the Court's ECF system.

Why do I receive an e-mail notice of a document filed and served traditionally on paper?

CM/ECF, which is being implemented in federal courts nationwide, is a case management system used by the Eastern District of Wisconsin to manage all documents filed in all cases – both electronically filed and those filed traditionally on paper. Once an attorney registers for e-filing, CM/ECF e-mails a notice of filing of *all* documents, even those filed traditionally on paper.

How do I electronically sign a document?

A pleading or other document requiring an attorney's signature shall be signed in the following manner, whether filed electronically or submitted on disk to the Clerk's Office:

"s/Attorney Name "

The correct format for a signature is as follows:

s/ Attorney Name
Attorney Name Bar Number: 12345
Attorney for (Plaintiff/Defendant)
ABC Law Firm
123 South Street
Milwaukee, WI 53202
Telephone: (414) 123-4567
Fax: (414)123-4567
E-mail: attorneyname@law.com

ONLY DOCUMENTS SIGNED IN THIS FASHION WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR FILING

For more detailed information, please refer to **Section II.C.** of the **Civil and Criminal Policies and Procedures Manuals** on our web site, www.wied.uscourts.gov, under **CM/ECF - Electronic Case Filing**.

What about documents, such as a Stipulation, that are signed by multiple attorneys? Or a document signed by a non-attorney?

The filing attorney shall initially confirm that the content of the document is acceptable to all persons required to sign the document and shall obtain the signatures of all persons on the document. For purposes of this rule, physical, facsimile, or electronic signatures are permitted. The filing attorney shall then electronically file the document using the following signature format: "s/ Jane Doe," "s/ John Smith," etc.

This same procedure applies for documents which contain the signature of a non-attorney.

NOTE: Documents that are electronically filed and require original signatures other than that of the filing attorney must be maintained in paper form by the filing attorney until one year has passed after the time period for appeal expires. The filing attorney must provide original documents for review upon request of the judge.

How do I view documents filed in a Social Security Appeal case?

The viewing of documents in Social Security Appeal cases is restricted to attorneys of record *only*. Because of this restriction, the following sequence of steps must be followed when you receive the e-mail notification of filing:

- 1) log into CM/ECF using your court issued login name and password
- 2) open the e-mail notice and click on the document number
- 3) you will receive the Pacer login screen – use your Pacer login name and password
- 4) view the document

Are documents restricted in Criminal cases also?

Documents filed prior to 11/1/2004 are restricted for viewing by attorneys of record only. Follow the same procedure for viewing documents as in Social Security Appeals. Documents filed since that time are not restricted.

What ECF event should I use to electronically file the proof of service that the civil complaint was served upon the defendant?

Use **Summons Returned Executed** located in category, **Issuance and Service of Process**. You will be prompted to “Select the Party Served” and “Enter the Date Served”.

For a complete list of events by category, refer to the **ECF User Manual, Appendices A and B**, located on our website – www.wied.uscourts.gov

How do I determine who is receiving electronic notice prior to e-filing my document?

To determine who is receiving electronic notice and who must be served via paper on a specific case, go to:

Utilities -> -> -> Mailings... -> -> -> Mailing Info for a Case

The next screen contains two separate lists: attorneys and their e-mail addresses who will receive electronic notice and attorneys with their full street addresses who must be served traditionally with paper.

How do I know who receives a notice of electronic filing after filing?

Upon completion of an electronic filing, the final screen is your Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF). This is confirmation that your filing has been received by ECF. Scroll down to the bottom of the NEF, and you will see:

[case number] Notice will be electronically mailed to:

jdattorney@lawfirm.com

jesquire@smithjones.com

[case number] Notice will be delivered by other means to:

Robert Attorney
Robert Law Office
1234 Main Street
Milwaukee, WI 53202

NOTE: Check the Notice Electronic Filing carefully – those parties listed under “Notice will be delivered by other means to:” *must* be served with a traditional paper copy.

How do I submit proposed orders?

1. The motion or stipulation is electronically filed with the proposed order as an attachment to the motion or stipulation. **Do not** combine the motion or stipulation with the proposed order into one document.
2. In addition, e-mail the proposed order in word processing format, **not PDF**, to the assigned judge’s chambers.

Please refer to the **ECF Civil Policies and Procedures Manual Section II.F.** when submitting proposed orders to the court. The **Manual** is located on the Court’s web site, www.wied.uscourts.gov, under **CM/ECF - Electronic Case Filing**.

NOTE: E-mail addresses for the Judge’s chambers are listed in the **Manual and on the web site under Contact Information**. Click on the judge’s name for the PO E-Mail box address.

Use the event “Proposed Document” for Proposed Orders not accompanied by a motion or stipulation.

What is the procedure for e-filing a Motion to Seal?

All documents, with the exception of those listed below, are e-filed. As e-filed documents, they are subject to Section III.A. of the Civil and Criminal Policies and Procedures Manuals.

Specifically, a Motion to Seal is e-filed as follows:

- 1) The Motion to Seal is electronically filed with the Proposed Order as an attachment – the Proposed Order is also e-mailed to the assigned judge.
- 2) Per Local Rule 79.4, the sealed documents must be filed with the Clerk's Office in a sealed envelope conspicuously marked "Request for Confidentiality Pending".

Excluded Documents

Civil Complaint
Criminal Indictment or Information
Criminal Plea Agreement
Notice of Appeal
State Court Records
Social Security Transcripts
Sealed Documents
Documents exceeding 5 MB
Documents unavailable in electronic format

How do I e-file a Proposed Bill of Costs?

Use the following procedure when electronically filing a Proposed Bill of Costs in a civil case.

Download the Bill of Costs form from our web site, www.wied.uscourts.gov, where it is located under the heading "Forms".

Sign the Bill of Costs using your electronic signature: "s/attorney name".

Electronically file it using the event --

Other Filings ----- Other Documents ----- Bill of Costs

Attach the PDF file of your Bill of Costs as the main document and any attachments as separate PDF files.

NOTE: Do not scan the proposed Bill of Costs prior to converting it to PDF.

Can I reply to the “ecfmaster” Notice of Electronic Filing?

No. The Notices of Electronic Filing are sent via e-mail from “ecfmaster”. The subject line refers to “Activity in [Case Number] and [Case Title]”. Upon opening the e-mail, the document can be viewed by clicking on the document number.

DO NOT REPLY VIA E-MAIL TO THE

“ecfmaster” NOTICE OF ELECTRONIC FILING

Replies are not sent to a live person. If you have any questions about your Notice of Electronic Filing, please call the ECF Help Desk -- 1-866-438-5410.